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## CHAPTER 5

# HYBRID LOCAL OWNERSHIP IN BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA AND KOSOVO: FROM DISCURSIVE TO MATERIAL ASPECTS OF OWNERSHIP

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### Introduction

Although local ownership seems to have been embraced almost as a consensus in the peacebuilding world and literature, the recent protests in Bosnia-Herzegovina<sup>2</sup> have outlined the failed agenda of gradually transferring the ownership of peacebuilding structures and policies from international to local actors. Instead, what we see is a mass uprising against the underlying conditions of the peace- and statebuilding project as a whole, questioning its legitimacy and pointing to the need to rethink the often imposing ways of ownership transferral. Instead of leading to sustainable forms of co-owned peace between a variety of actors, local ownership has often been locally perceived as patronising and only superficially connected to local needs.

On an international level, after a decade of evolution toward more ‘integrated,’ ‘multi-faceted,’ or simply stated more intrusive peace operations, with the high point being the United Nations administrations of Kosovo and Timor-Leste at the beginning of this century, the peacebuilding literature has started to take heed of the “unintended consequences” agenda

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<sup>1</sup> Earlier versions of this manuscript have been presented at the workshop on “Local Governance and Peacebuilding”, Bradford, UK, 29-30 August 2013, and at the Second Annual Conference of the International Association for Peace and Conflict Studies, Manchester, UK, 12-13 September 2013. The authors would like to thank the organisers and the participants for their comments

<sup>2</sup> BiH or Bosnia from here onwards.

(Aoi, de Coning and Thakur 2007; Hull et al. 2009) to integrate in its analysis all facets of interventions and not only those accounted for traditionally by peacebuilding actors themselves. Debates around *sovereignty* and rules of engagement, which were so central in the first half of the 1990s (Thakur and Thaker 1995), gave way to discussions on *authority* and international administrations at the end of the 1990s (Lemay-Hébert 2012b), which constituted to a certain extent “the last stage of the teleological evolution of the UN as the central player in the human quest for world order” (Adibe 1998: 112). However, the difficult experiences in Iraq, Timor-Leste and Kosovo led in turn to new discussions on the *means* of intervention, and to a renewed interest in the concept of local ownership. In this context, local ownership is understood as a process where the solutions to a particular society’s needs are developed in concert with the people who are going to live with, and uphold, these solutions in the long run (Hansen and Wiharta 2007; see also Donais 2012).

In the peacebuilding context, and after having been a preeminent architect of the international administrations in Kosovo<sup>3</sup> and Timor-Leste, Kofi Annan rediscovered the virtues of recognising local agency before passing the relay to Ban Ki-Moon. In 2002, national ownership suddenly becomes “the single most important determinant of the effectiveness of capacity-building programmes” (UN 2002). In *Rule of Law and Transitional Justice in Conflict and Post-Conflict Societies*, Kofi Annan recognised that no international initiative “imposed from the outside can hope to be successful or sustainable.” In this context, “the role of the United Nations and the international community should be solidarity, not substitution” (UN 2004: para. 17). He notably restated this view at the opening session of the newly established Peacebuilding Commission, noting for instance that “peacebuilding requires national ownership, and must be homegrown. Outsiders, however well-intentioned, cannot substitute for the knowledge and will of the people of the country concerned” (UN 2006).

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<sup>3</sup> The idea of an international administration in Kosovo was first expressed by Annan on 3 May 1999 in a private meeting (Kreilkamp 2002: 643).

While not being as proactive as his predecessor in the sphere of norms creation and diffusion, Ban Ki-Moon all but pursued the same peacebuilding agenda set by Kofi Annan in the last years of his secretaryship, restating the importance of local ownership at the Peacebuilding Commission (UN 2007) and in reports on peacebuilding submitted at the General Assembly and the Security Council (UN 2009). Local ownership to a certain extent reflects his “do more with less” approach (UN 2011).

The ‘local ownership turn’ was greeted with mixed reception in the peacebuilding literature. On the one hand, the ‘problem solving’ literature welcomes it as a way to bolster the process of international institutional promotion of global norms of good governance. An appropriate transfer of powers to legitimate local representatives allows external statebuilders more time for as sustainable completion of the mandate while giving more time to the host society “to develop the ground for a sound political and civic culture” (Narten 2009: 279). In this regard, local ownership, as well as discussion on how to increase participation and consultation, is understood as integral to the “sequencing debate” (Paris 2004: 179-211; Barnett 2006). Ownership is seen as a decisive condition to increase the quality and accountability of interventions (Pouligny 2009: 5).

On the other hand, the critical literature generally portrays the local ownership turn as a “rhetorical device” (Scheye and Peake 2005: 240; Richmond 2012: 362) or “rhetorical cover” (Chandler 2011: 87), more aspirational than concrete (Reich 2006: 7) and used to legitimize external control (Wilén 2009: 348; Newman 2009: 50). The statement “there is much talk of ownership, but often this is not much more than lip service” (Boege et al. 2009: 29) seems to encapsulate the general argument made by this eclectic group of scholars – an argument generally supported by extensive empirical research. Power redistribution – implied in the local ownership discourse – is considered marginal and does not involve a fundamental

rethinking of the meaning and location of power (Mac Ginty 2011: 45). Hence, the term ownership is understood to imply “varying degrees of local control that are typically not realized” (Chesterman 2007: 21).

Against this background, this chapter opens up the debate by distinguishing two distinct dimensions of ownership: social and material. As such, this chapter aims to fill a gap in the literature on ownership, where most scholars focus on social aspects of peacebuilding ownership while marginalising its material implications. Instead of a debate revolving around the limited or unrestricted potential of local ownership, the inclusion of those two dimensions of ownership enables us to present a more subtle account of peacebuilding processes, where ownership can at the same time be discursive and material, whilst also deep and superficial. This chapter will argue that local ownership in Bosnia-Herzegovina (Bosnia or BiH) and in Kosovo was of a distinctly hybrid form, with on the one hand, the omnipresence of cooptation practices and discursive use of the local ownership jargon (both from international and local actors), and on the other hand, a deeper material ownership encompassing situations where there is socialisation process for locals into donor structures as well as donors socialisation into local practices, a situation that leads in the cases of Bosnia and Kosovo more to dependency creation than to an imaginary endgame of endogenous and sustainable development in the region.

### **The rise of the local ownership agenda in the Balkans**

The liberal peacebuilding agenda took a specific, yet intertwined, route in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo. Both cases have shown the limits of external interventionism when conceived as direct administration or heavy-handedness, leading to a renewed interest in local

ownership. Both cases are also related in many ways: through shared history of course,<sup>4</sup> but also through the ‘lessons learned’ discourse by internationals, with experience from one case spilling over the decision making of the second.

The international architecture following the 1995 General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, known as the Dayton Accord, is particularly complex and singular. First, Security Council Resolution 1031 (1995), in accordance with the Dayton Accord, endorsed the establishment of a High Representative to “mobilize and, as appropriate, give guidance to, and coordinate the activities of the civilian organizations and agencies” involved with the civilian aspects of the peace agreement. Additionally to the Office of the High Representative (OHR), Security Council Resolution 1035 established the United Nations International Police Task Force (IPTF) and a United Nations civilian office, brought together as the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMBiH). The UNMBiH had a relatively minimal role in terms of civilian affairs, whereas the real executive power rested with the OHR. Even if the UNMBiH, “through a combination of mission creep and sometimes combative relations with the High Representative” (Chesterman 2004: 76-77) ultimately exercised a wide range of functions related to demining, humanitarian relief, human rights, elections and rehabilitation of infrastructure and economic reconstruction, the civilian presence was mostly assured by the OHR, with the High Representative supervising the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement in the political realm.

After a first period marked by a low-key approach by the OHR, combined with a consolidation of Serb, Bosniak and Croat hard-line position, and frustrated by the manifest lack of progress, the OHR saw its prerogatives considerably expanded after the Bonn Summit of the Peace Implementation Council of December 1997. In the words of the former High

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<sup>4</sup> An interesting point was made by LSE researchers, showing that for local partners in Bosnia and Kosovo, local ownership relates more to property rights (due to government control of companies) than to political control (Martin et al. 2012: 4).

Representative Wolfgang Petritsch, the introduction of the so-called “Bonn Powers” “shifted the equation of the international presence in favour of the civilian implementation efforts and brought Bosnia closer to a protectorate-like status” (2004: 12). Indeed, Petritsch started to dismiss more and more public officials, from mayors up to members of the collective State Presidency for obstruction against the implementation of the Dayton Accord. Moreover, the OHR immediately started an integrationist legislation for state and society by decreeing laws on citizenship, the flag, the national anthem, the currency, ethnically neutral licence plates and passports: all laws the nationalist parties could not agree on in the Parliamentary Assembly. These powers “were abundantly used” in Bosnia (Cousens and Harland: 101; Knaus and Martin 2003: 66), which had repercussions on the social fabric of the Bosnian society (Belloni 2001; Kappler 2013; Kappler and Richmond 2011).

In Kosovo, following the NATO Operation Allied Force that expelled the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia’s forces out of Kosovo, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 1244 on 10 June 1999. The resolution established an international civil and security presence to administer Kosovo, UNMIK and the NATO-led Kosovo Force respectively. The United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK)’s mandate as stipulated in Resolution 1244 was threefold: to establish a functioning interim civil administration, to promote the establishment of substantial autonomy and self-government, and finally to facilitate a political process to determine Kosovo’s future status. One innovative feature of the mandate was the concentration of powers to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. Strictly speaking, there is no separation of powers in the framework of the international administration of Kosovo: executive, legislative, and judicial authority are vested in a single individual, the transitional administrator (Caplan 2005, p. 196). The challenges of externally-led statebuilding have been noted by various contributions (see for instance: Hehir 2006; King and Mason 2006; Lemay-Hébert 2013; Visoka 2011).

The overall international experiment in Bosnia can certainly be described, as the former High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch states, as a “watershed experience” that defined the evolution of future peace missions, especially in the Balkans (quoted in Bose 2002: 108). According to another former High Representative Lord Paddy Ashdown, one of the lessons of the Bosnian experience was the necessity to grant effective authority to the peace mission from the start: “it is vital to go in with the authority you need from the start. (...) On the civilian side, this means starting off with the powers needed to get the job done, rather than having to acquire them later, as we did in Bosnia to our cost” (2004). Similarly, the EU Administrator Hans Koschnick in Mostar, when reflecting on his experience, said that his greatest mistake during the first year was “not to take over the control immediately and to impose basic freedoms at that point vigorously” (quoted in: Korhonen 2001: 517). These lessons will be kept in mind once the UN would be confronted with the problem Kosovo in 1998-1999. In fact, as Paddy Ashdown unambiguously noted:

history will look back on our engagement in Bosnia and Herzegovina as the first faltering step toward a doctrine of international community. Bosnia will be seen as a new model for international intervention -- one designed not to pursue narrow national interests but to prevent conflict, to promote human rights and to rebuild war-torn societies. We are already applying the lessons of Bosnia in Kosovo, East Timor and Afghanistan. Perhaps they will be applied in Iraq as well (2002, A25)

Corroborating Ashdown’s interpretation of Bosnia’s ‘lessons learned,’ the former High Representative Carlos Westendorp advocated a ‘full international protectorate’ for Kosovo:



“it may last for a few years. Yes, this disregards the principles of sovereignty, but so what? This is not the moment for post-colonial sensitivity. Besides, there is no other way of guaranteeing the security of the people who live in Kosovo, be they Serbs or Albanians” (Westendorp 1999). This is an analysis that was also shared by various International Crisis Group reports and by op-eds in major newspapers at that time (Lemay-Hébert 2011).

A few years later, the tone was clearly less triumphant, both in Bosnia and Kosovo. Discussions on norm imposition and international administration gave way to a new-found interest in local ownership processes. After a period of heavy OHR intervention into local politics under Paddy Ashdown, the former High Representative Christian Schwartz-Schilling saw his role in his capacity “to oversee the transition from today’s quasi-protectorate to local ownership” (2006). In that respect, it could be observed that ownership increasingly became part and parcel of the European Union’s increasing engagement in the country. The need to close the Office of the High Representative as one of the conditions for EU membership made clear that the EU wanted to take less responsibility for the political fate of the country and to include a sovereign BiH as a member state.

The ownership debate between the EU and local partners was conducted through policies of conditionality, or a carrot and stick approach. An increasing focus on local ownership is not least due to the failure of the EU’s attempt to embark on local trusteeship projects taking over governance functions on the local and communal level, for instance by appointing a European Union Administrator in Mostar. This project had turned out to be a failure in terms of neither managing to establish a joint city administration nor an adequate refugee return mechanism to counter the ethnic division of the city (Cox 1998). Therefore, the instrument of Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA), signed in 2008, placed emphasis on institution- and capacity-building in the light of eventual accession to the EU.

However, while strengthening such aspects of the gradual transferral of local ownership over institutions, the EU has in parallel been criticised of implicitly reinforcing control mechanisms through the imposition of conditionalities (Merlingen and Ostrauskaitė 2006). In pursuit of local ownership, the EU has promoted public campaigns, such as “Put u Evropu zavisí od vas” (“The way into Europe depends on you”), which however did not manage to overcome resistance to EU electoral laws in parliament and mirrors the extent to which European symbolism has sometimes been overestimated (Coles 2007). On the one hand, the EU has realised that ‘local ownership’ is needed to create and maintain the legitimacy of the peacebuilding process – at least in rhetorical terms. On the other hand, it can be observed that the concept of ownership has often failed to transcend a rather superficial approach, in which processes are only handed over to locals if the latter are expected to support rather than undermine the EU’s policies. Not only does civil society represent a subcontractor for the EU to be able to implement its policies such as democratisation and reconciliation, but at the same time it serves as a legitimating device for the EU to claim local legitimacy and ownership rather than imposition (European Commission 2006).

The debates around local ownership increasingly came to be centered around police reform, which the EU took responsibility for, but which was often criticised as even undermining ownership rather than strengthening it (cf. Merlingen and Ostrauskaitė 2006). The EU’s lack of trust in its initial approach to strengthen local ownership in different institutions was seconded by the High Representative Lajčák, who argued in favour of a more robust approach to intervention: “We Must Act Robustly And Creatively” (OHR 2007a). Venneri, perhaps controversially, argues that, rather than leading to local ownership, international reform programmes have instead been conquered and manipulated by local elites (2013). What becomes clear is the fact that there has constantly been a tension on the part of

internationals between the perceived need to control and the rhetoric of creating ownership locally to be able to gradually withdraw from what has become a costly undertaking.

In Kosovo, the progressive handover of supervision competencies to the European Union and to the International Civilian Office (ICO) after Pristina's unilateral declaration of independence gave the chance for internationals to reflect on the international experiment so far. Torbjorn Sohlstrom, Head of International Civilian Office Preparation Team, stated in 2007 that the new international presence "will have a very different relationship with the authorities of Kosovo." He further emphasized that "the international community will no longer seek to govern Kosovo. People often suggest that the ICO will be the successor of UNMIK. That is not the intention." While the ICO is likely to retain rights to intervene, Sohlstrom notes that "unlike the situation in Kosovo today, and unlike the situation in Bosnia, such powers would be clearly limited and clearly defined." (Sohlstrom 2007: 50). Sohlstrom is not alone in his defense of a new approach for the international presence in Kosovo. For instance, Christina Gallach, spokesperson of Javier Solana, stated that "the basic role will not be the one of supplanting the local authorities. The local authorities will assume fully their responsibilities and they will have to develop every single aspect of authority that is going to be given to them. But the EU will definitely do the mentoring, monitoring with reduced aspects of executive powers" (South East Europe TV Exchanges 2007). Another EU official, Caspar Klynge, reinforced the parallel with the OHR by mentioning that "the plan is to provide the EU with a similar authority as the Senior High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina, so that it could intervene politically by annulling decisions and replacing officials who were in breach of laws" (NATO Parliamentary Assembly 2006: para. 20).<sup>5</sup> For

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<sup>5</sup> Officials in Brussels and Washington have often used the OHR in Bosnia as a reference for the establishment of the ICO (Interviews in Washington and Brussels quoted in ICO 2012: 76), even if the ICO leadership prided itself on not becoming Bosnia's OHR (ICO 2012: 85).

<sup>5</sup> In addition to the EU Rule of Law Mission (EULEX), and the remnants of the still valid UNSC Resolution 1244: UNMIK and NATO's Kosovo Force (KFOR).

the International Civilian Representative Pieter Feith, the focus on local ownership was clear: “I am working on the basis of local ownership and I am more an advisor than an administrator” (2008: 3). Even if the Ahtisaari Plan vested the ICO with executive authority to supervise Kosovo’s political development, Feith acknowledged that “has not felt the need to exercise these powers – mainly out of respect for the principle of local ownership and responsibility” (Feith 2009: 4).

Hence, the local ownership agenda in Kosovo became a priority for international officials through the realisation of the limits of external rule between 1999 and 2004. After a period of progressive hand-over of competencies from UNMIK to local institutions between 2004 and 2008, Kosovo’s unilateral declaration of independence in February 2008 opened up a new chapter of international supervision, marked by the establishment of the ICO, mandated to oversee the progressive application of Ahtisaari’s Plan.<sup>6</sup> The approach taken was a “more than Skopje but less than Sarajevo” formula (ICO 2012: 6), and the ICR has focused on the supervisory aspects of his mandate without relying on the use of direct, executive powers (Hill and Linden-Retek 2010: 34). This “fast-track progress toward local ownership” (ICO 2012: 68)<sup>7</sup> had as much to do with the realisation that the ICR worked in an environment “where irate members of the Kosovar/Albanian and Kosovar/Serbian communities did not have the appetite for yet another ‘occupying’ mission in Kosovo” (ICO 2012: 59) than the constraints related to its relations with Quint members<sup>8</sup> and other embassies in Pristina (ICO 2012: 68). The closure of the ICO in September 2012, as well as the Belgrade-Pristina agreement on technical cooperation in April 2013, marked the beginning of a yet another

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<sup>6</sup> In addition to the EU Rule of Law Mission (EULEX), and the remnants of the still valid UNSC Resolution 1244: UNMIK and NATO’s Kosovo Force (KFOR).

<sup>7</sup> Interestingly enough, local ownership is understood as a state (the final stage of independence) as well as a process by the ICO. Another example is when the ICO refers to a “leaner international presence that would allow Kosovo to *transfer to local ownership* at the earliest opportunity” (ICO 2012: 69).

<sup>8</sup> Quint countries include France, Germany, Italy, the UK, and the US.

chapter of supervision of Kosovo, this time revolving around EU neighbourhood and accession policy.

### **Social and material ownership in Bosnia and Kosovo**

Against the background of our claim that ownership can be superficial or deep, social or material in nature, we argue that different ownership constellations are possible. While peacebuilding actors tend to hope for the creation of deep social ownership structures in the long run, we suggest here that peace- and state-building tends to lead to deep material ownership, which is less sustainable due to the dependency of the intervention on material resources. The following two examples of Bosnia and Kosovo both reflect this tendency.

#### ***Ownership in BiH***

The issue of local ownership has been addressed and viewed as one of the main challenges for Bosnia's reconstruction period by a number of international players (OHR 2007b; Delegation of the European Commission to BiH 2007; UNDP 2010; OSCE Mission to Bosnia-Herzegovina 2009). At the same time, most agencies seem to explicitly state a lack of local ownership over the peacebuilding process. Particularly in interviews with World Bank, EU and OHR representatives between 2008 and 2011, the lack of ownership was emphasised as one of the most pressing challenges of post-conflict Bosnia. This problem was mainly ascribed to the nature of cooperation with local authorities, which were often viewed as complex or even problematic.<sup>9</sup> At the same time, the local population seems to be more divided about the need to strengthen ownership, or alternatively, whether to ask for even stronger degrees of intervention (cf. Kostic 2008).

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<sup>9</sup> Xavier Oleiro-Ogando, Delegation of the EU in BiH, personal interview, Sarajevo, 15/03/10.

Interestingly enough, however, neither local nor international narratives tend to define the concrete meaning of ownership, and a linkage between material and social ownership is taken for granted. Instead, from an institutional perspective, local ownership is viewed as a political process, which is expected to spill over into diverse elements of society, both socio-political and economic. The EU, for instance, understands ownership as the attempt to make people responsible for their own decisions, ideally through passing on knowledge to people from the EU, that is, from EU practice to local partners.<sup>10</sup>

Yet, while this approach seems to suggest a long-term involvement in political change, what we can observe in actual practice is a strong link between international institutions and local actors on a material level, while those links hardly turn into long-term social attachments to the peace that is being built. In this respect, it is striking to observe that whenever actors, such as NGO staff, but also Bosnian politicians in and outside Sarajevo, speak about their relationship with the international community, they tend to focus on the financial aspects of cooperation. Grant applications and financial support seem to be the key benefits of international peacebuilding, while there is hardly ever any mentioning of a joint vision or normative system of attachment. The aspect of international peacebuilding which seems to feed into local practice is therefore a socialisation into donor structures instead of joint agenda of hybrid peacebuilding, of which local actors take ownership. Interviewees often mentioned the need to obtain better access to funding and to obtain training to improve their funding proposals.<sup>11</sup> In this context, it has been suggested that people are very clever in figuring out what donors want to hear,<sup>12</sup> while mutual engagement with their social and normative agendas between donors and recipients seems to remain limited. In that respect, the attachment to peace in mere financial / material terms suggests a clear path towards the

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<sup>10</sup> Xavier Oleiro Ogando, Delegation of the EU in BiH, personal interview, Sarajevo, 08/03/10.

<sup>11</sup> E.g. Eleonora Emkic, Gariwo, personal interview, Sarajevo, 23/04/10

<sup>12</sup> S.Magdalena Schildknecht, Narko-Ne, personal interview, Sarajevo, 11/03/10.

creation of material ownership. However, this does not result in sustainable forms of social ownership of the peace being created, but instead means that the subjects of peacebuilding only feel the need to engage with the resources underpinning peacebuilding and its associated political economy.

On the part of local recipients, this is often framed as a lack of a vision of actors such as the EU, which is perceived as lacking inspiration, meaningful content and vibration, being focused on the business-aspects of peace.<sup>13</sup> This is linked to a more general perception of the international community as not very engaged in the contents of peace,<sup>14</sup> despite the fact that it has spent considerable amounts of money on peacebuilding in Bosnia. An NGO representative has even emphasised that, although the government feeds and creates NGOs by sustaining them with international money, instead of facilitating locally owned peacebuilding and connecting citizens to government, this has only reinforced the status quo.<sup>15</sup>

At the same time, this observation of a failure to translate the ownership of material resources, often in the form of project money and grants, into socially sustainable attachment to peace, is not only an observation at the grassroots. A staff member of the OHR, for instance, explained that the OHR feeds money into big projects, while such resources often end up in the pockets of those who are at the origin of conflict.<sup>16</sup> In that respect, this creates a situation of ‘feeding the hand that bites you’<sup>17</sup>, and rather than facilitating local discussions about the nature of peace being built, this approach risks creating further structures of exclusion and disempowerment. This focus on the material aspects of ownership, which is

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<sup>13</sup> Nihad Kresevljakovic, MESS, personal interview, Sarajevo, 01/04/10; Sanel Huskic, ACIPS, personal interview, Sarajevo, 15/03/10; Nebojsa Savija-Valha, Ambrosia, personal interview, Sarajevo, 23/03/10.

<sup>14</sup> Pierre Courtin, Duplex Gallery, personal interview, Sarajevo, 06/04/10.

<sup>15</sup> Nebojsa Savija-Valha, NDC, personal interview, Sarajevo, 12/03/09.

<sup>16</sup> Confidential source, OHR staff, personal interview, Banja Luka, 27/04/10.

<sup>17</sup> Confidential source, OHR staff, personal interview, Banja Luka, 27/04/10.

clearly non-negligible, means that peacebuilding risks turning into a professionalised, administrative exercise, instead losing the focus on social sustainability and on the conditions under which it can be locally owned and negotiated.

NGOs, such as Mozaik, an organisation based in Sarajevo and pursuing a variety of projects throughout the country, which are well funded, need to concentrate a large part of their energies on the administrative aspects of their work. Staff emphasised their need to maintain a professionalised finance department as well as keeping good links to a variety of donors, including the World Bank, UNDP and the EU.<sup>18</sup> This example clearly reflects a deep socialisation into donors' funding structures and a commitment to responding to those. However, it is not fully clear to what extent a professionalization of organisational structures will eventually lead to a greater local attachment to peace and peacebuilding.

International actors do realise this issue indeed, particularly in a phase of the reconstruction effort in which resources are shrinking. In this context, a representative of a Bosnian NGO reported during a meeting with representatives of the European Commission, the latter emphasised that NGOs in the Western Balkans now needed to learn 'to grow up' and stand on their own feet to be able to survive.<sup>19</sup> In a similar vein, the OHR seems to be concerned that local people will be unable to resolve their political issues without the intervention of the High Representative – as the recent intervention of the High Representative in the context of Bosnia's 'babylution' has shown (cf. Armakolas and Maksimovic 2013). This is not least due to a low level of trust in local agencies. There seems to be a belief among a number of internationals that Bosnians do not necessarily vote in their best interest and can easily be fooled by the media.<sup>20</sup> Similarly, local elites (perhaps more so in the Federation than in Republika Srpska) rely on external intervention. An MP, for instance, said that she expected

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<sup>18</sup> Vesna Bajsanski-Agic, Mozaik, personal interview, Sarajevo, 24/03/10.

<sup>19</sup> Confidential source, personal conversation, Brussels, 04/05/11.

<sup>20</sup> Mark Wheeler, OHR, personal interview, Sarajevo, 16/03/10.



the OHR to intervene in the delayed process of government formation in 2010/11 in terms of implementing the election results in the three cantons in which no local agreement could be found.<sup>21</sup> This, however, means that attachment to international peacebuilding policies does exist, which is strong on a material level.

On a socio-political level, however, attachment seems more fragmented and superficial (relying on intervention to solve problems that cannot be solved locally rather than out of a commitment to its normative underpinnings). Such processes illustrate the lack of mutual in-depth engagement between donors and recipients, that is, a process kickstarting a process of ownership transferral beyond superficial lip-service. The latter is often necessary to gain access to funding, but points to a lack of a common discursive agenda around peace and peacebuilding. Yet, the divergent visions of peace between a number of local actors and international agencies precludes a process during the course of which strong attachment to the social underpinnings of peacebuilding can develop (Kappler 2012). Instead, those actors which are keen to bring about genuine transformation sometimes withdraw from international funding to be able to act freely, the artist association Ambrosia being one example. The organisers decided to self-fund their activities to be able to act more freely.

In that sense, material attachment, which is rather strong in BiH, does not necessarily lead to deep social attachment. Ownership of peacebuilding seems to be mostly material, linked to a socialisation into donor discourses and procedures, and dependent on the availability of resources. Yet, particularly in the light of shrinking resources, a long-term social engagement and debate about the meanings and agents of peacebuilding does not seem to result from this. Local ownership of peacebuilding thus resists and coopts against the background that

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<sup>21</sup> Nermina Zaimovic-Uzunovic, SDP, personal interview, Sarajevo, 07/03/11.

accommodation and acceptance of peacebuilding policies only happen when there is a clear convergence of interests and visions of peace.

### *Ownership in Kosovo*

The social field of international-local relations in Kosovo has been marked by a few constants that characterise the level of social attachment in Kosovo, including: 1) various benchmarks imposed by international custodians throughout the years – from Steiner’s Standards Before Status in 2002 to the Comprehensive Peace Proposal also known as the Ahtisaari Plan in 2007 – each plan being met with a mix of either ambivalence, reluctant acceptance and sometimes overt resistance; 2) co-optation and instrumentalisation strategies employed both by international and local officials to achieve their own goals, distorting in the process the content and meaning of the ‘values’ being exported in Kosovo; 3) and a constant focus on ‘stability’ from an international perspective, coupled with the reduction of social interactions to their simplest inter-ethnic component.

As an OSCE official mentioned when asked about the various benchmarks in Kosovo: “if Kosovo were successful in applying all standards, it would be a paradise on earth.”<sup>22</sup> In effect, the standards – a succession of hoops that Kosovars had to jump into to be seen as “worthy of being free”<sup>23</sup> – have been widely considered by locals as a necessary evil to achieve full international recognition by the international community. Opposed to them when seen as an unsubtle way to delay independence – Steiner’s “standards to prevent status” being a good example in the words of the former Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General Jock Covey (2005: 121) – grudgingly abiding by them when associated with a status-positive institution like the ICO, the success of standards promotion has varied depending on

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<sup>22</sup> Franklin de Vrieze, OSCE Mission in Kosovo, personal interview, Pristina, 8/07/07.

<sup>23</sup> Senior EU official in Brussels (interview quoted in ICO 2012: 70).

the nature of the local and international context and the identity of the actor promoting the standards.

All of these attempts have been greeted with partial success (or failure, depending on the interpretation): in 2004 and 2005, the Eide reports put an end to standards implementation, making clear that “while standards implementation in Kosovo has been uneven, the time has come to move to the next phase of the political process” (UN 2005). The “next phase of the political process” actually consisted of yet another set of standards, this time included in the Ahtisaari Plan, and supervised by the ICO between 2008 and 2012. When the International Steering Group agreed to put an end to “supervised independence” in Kosovo in a meeting in July 2012 on the basis that “Kosovo has implemented the terms of the Comprehensive Settlement Proposal”, this bold statement was understood by the ICO itself as “desirable in order to avoid too much debate around the details” and as the result of an effort “to re-interpret and re-define what ‘implementation’ would look like” (ICO 2012: 133). Hence, while the standards promotion agenda has structured social relations between internationals and locals throughout the years, it has been consistently watered down, according to the political requirements of the moment.

Integral to the process are the co-optation policies that have been central since the very beginning, used by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of UN Kouchner to dissolve parallel structures and to consolidate UN authority south of the Ibar River in 1999 for instance (Lemay-Hébert 2012a), at least until the Kosovar leaders realised that local “consultation” was indeed very limited. Instrumentalisation of the international policies has also been displayed by local actors, using the language of liberal peace to secure international support (Franks and Richmond 2008; Narten 2008). Interestingly enough, Kosovar politicians are suddenly being less receptive to norms promotion after realising that the International

Civilian Representative was reluctant to use his executive powers –delaying appointments of minority-reserved ministerial positions, or tolerating and promoting rampant corruption in all sectors of civic and political life (ICO 2012: 69). Also they were being more assertive and “less pliant” on minority issues after ICJ’s advisory opinion favourable to Pristina (ICO 2012: 50).

Finally, a third element that calibrates the level of attachment to peace in Kosovo is the constant focus on stability and ethnicity by international actors. UNMIK established ethnicity as the defining social characteristic in Kosovo, and the international administration embedded ethnic identities in the political system, making it a crucial factor in the apportioning of power from the start (Hehir 2006). Thus, international custodians did not try to build a “new Kosovar nation”, but rather a “multi-ethnic” Kosovo (Pula 2005, 32; Simonsen 2004). This is an opinion shared by Albin Kurti of the *Lëvizja VETËVENDOSJE!* movement, for whom the internationals “see no people in Kosovo”, only different ethnicities in a process where “individuals become random samples of particular collectives” (2011: 91). Not seeing potential “Kosovar citizens,” international custodians have from the start identified all Kosovars in terms of ethnicity defined as communities (the pervasive K-Albanian, K-Serbian discourse), using a filter of ethnicity to “read” the conflict in Kosova in terms reducible for purposes of explanation (Blumi 2003: 218-219). It is also an opinion shared by many internationals. For instance, for an OSCE official, internationals should have tried to build citizenship of Kosovo and not reinforce ethnic loyalties.<sup>24</sup> There is also a recognition that internationals have reinforced ethnic divisions in the country.<sup>25</sup> For an UNMIK official, the multiple layers of positive discrimination imposed by international community has damaged the process of inter-ethnic reconciliation by empowering radicals on both sides and

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<sup>24</sup> Liane Adler, OSCE Mission in Kosovo, personal interview, Pristina, 16/07/07.

<sup>25</sup> Edmond Efendija, National Democratic Institute, personal interview, 20/07/07

perpetuating ethnic division.<sup>26</sup> At the same time, internationals have unduly focused on a restricted understanding of security – especially the security of their personnel – which limited the nature of the intervention (King and Mason 2006: 6). As one interviewee put it, the internationals “want to keep peace and security, but they are not really interested in building a viable democracy”.<sup>27</sup>

More importantly, they have mistaken multi-ethnicity with ghettoisation (Lemay-Hébert 2012b), which became apparent in many discourses. NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson noted that “we are going to protect a multi-ethnic society here and we’ll do it if necessary by making sure the individual groups are protected in their homes and communities. If it involves building walls round them, barbed wire round them, giving them the protection they need, then we will do it” (NATO Online Library 2000). A senior UNMIK official recognised the dilemma, noting that “to really protect Kosovo as a multiethnic state - - in other words, to provide security for the Serbs who wanted to stay -- would have meant rapid ghettoization behind protected lines” (Erlanger 1999).

These points tell a story of limited social attachment to peace. However, the prolonged intervention in Kosovo has also produced its own hybrid form of peace. As Albin Kurti (2011: 92) notes,

turning thousands of internationals into ‘local internationals’, a different species from their compatriots back home. Years of international rule have turned local politicians and NGOs into ‘international locals’, a species that differs from their compatriots in Kosova. The ‘local internationals’ and the

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<sup>26</sup> Alan Packer, UNMIK, personal interview, 12/07/07.

<sup>27</sup> Lulzim Peci, KIPRED, personal interview, Pristina, 11/07/07

‘international locals’ are kept together by a happy marriage of interest, providing the system’s internal cohesion.

These hybrids will lead the consolidation of a material ownership, notably driven by the inflow of foreign assistance in Kosovo. During 2000–03, foreign assistance totalled €4.1 billion, equivalent to over twice Kosovo’s 2003 GDP, and private inflows added another €2.4 billion (Moalla-Fretini et al, 2005: 5). For the Economy Strategy and Project Identification Group, “the overall implications are clear: GDP growth in Kosovo’s economy was driven by external transfers, rather than from any lasting increase in the productivity of Kosovo’s enterprises” (2004: 7). This inevitably leads to rent seeking behaviour, incentivising the local elite to pursue immediate self-enrichment, distorting the economy as a result (Auty 2010). A large international presence can disrupt market efficiency and has unintended consequences on the social contract binding the government and its population. Rent through aid can reach 10 to 25% of GDP in developing countries according to numbers compiled by Peter Boone (1996), and postwar Kosovo was more on the higher end of that range in that regard.

While considered massive by scholars and practitioners in Kosovo at that time, the absence of reliable economic information makes it hard to precisely quantify rent-seeking practices in the aftermath of the intervention. Many different accounts reflect the same image of post-war Kosovo, with many Kosovans flocking to Pristina, “looking for work or ‘investment opportunities’,” trebling Pristina’s population in 3 years (King and Mason, 2006: 132). Mr. Bajrami, head of the Chamber of Commerce at the time, explains for instance that it pays better to sell chewing gum to the UN staff than to toil in the fields (Zaremba, 2007), while a cleaning lady working for the UN in Pristina earns three to four times more than a government minister (Ammitzboell, 2007: 76-77). From the very beginning, “wages paid by

the international community as a whole created wage distortions that put serious pressure on budgetary decisions” (del Castillo, 2008: 151). It created a ‘bubble economy’, where the influx of thousands of international employees provided a huge boost to specific sectors of the economy – restaurants, bars and bootleg CD sellers (King and Mason, 2006: 131). While the international donor assistance for Kosovo has gradually decreased, from 45 % of Kosovo’s general government revenues in 2004 to 27 % in 2010 (Republic of Kosovo, 2011: 6), it still remains high in comparative terms. Today, economic dysfunction and rampant corruption remains a part of the Kosovo landscape (ICO 2012: 79), and the immediate challenge for Kosovo is to break with this culture of dependency, which may be difficult given the vested interests of a group of actors in the perpetuation of the system.

## **Conclusion**

We have shown in this chapter that, rather than leading to locally-owned sustainable forms of peacebuilding, local ownership has often come to mean a deep socialisation into material donor structures. This has partly led to practices of rent-seeking, partly to creative ways of accessing international funding. Yet such practices have only rarely materialised into a substantive discussion about what a hybrid peace would look like substantially, as the cases of Kosovo and Bosnia-Herzegovina illustrate particularly well. Actually, most of the literature on ownership focuses on social aspects while marginalising the material implications of peacebuilding. As many analyses have shown, the degree to which local actors identify with the social components of peace seems rather limited. Shallow and superficial social ownership, encompassing logics of co-optation and discursive politics, are common occurrences in post-conflict or post-disaster theatres. However, such effects are not last due to a lack of interaction between different sets of actors and a platform on which

peace is discussed beyond its material implications. The nature of intervention has instead tended to be discussed with respect to the material framing of peace, while the more sensitive and potentially contested areas of peace, that is, mainly its key actors, stakeholders, discourses, and the associated socio-political relationships, have often been left out of the debate. Rather has there been a conflation of material and social ownership. We therefore suggest that discussions around the extent to which local ownership has been created (or not) has to be approached in a more nuanced way, distinguishing between different types of attachment to peace and, as a result of this, more material and/or social forms of local ownership. Indeed, while in many cases material ownership is present on a deep level, social ownership risks being superficial and discursive. The link between material and social ownership is therefore not natural as often assumed, but politicised and conditional on the nature of peace that is being promoted as well as the networks of actors that engage with it, or refuse to do so. Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo are two cases in which, as we argue, material ownership has failed to promote locally owned peace on a deep social level. It is not least due to this aspect that the success and failure of local ownership is deeply contested.

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